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THE

Benefit, Advantage, and Glory of Silent Meetings.

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As it was found at the beginning, or first breaking forth of this clear manifestation of Truth, and continues so to be found by all the Faithful and Upright in Heart at this Day.

Writ for the stirring up and encouraging of those, more especially who are lately Convinced unto the love of them, and diligent improving them, unto those ends and uses for which they serve.

By *George Keith*. K

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The Benefit, Advantage, and Glory of Silent Meetings.

BEfore the breaking forth of this clear manifeſtation of Truth, that now ſhineth in great Brightneſs and Glory, which began in the Nation of *England* ſome twenty ſix Years ago, or ſo, there was many People both in that Nation and elſewhere, in whom there was ſome true deſires and breathings raiſed and begot after the Lord, by the ſecret workings of his Eternal Power, inſomuch that many in that day began to ſeek the Lord in great Earneſtneſs and Zeal, upon whom he had cauſed his Light ſo far to ſhine forth, that thereby they came to ſee their Poverty, Nakedneſs and Emptineſs, notwithſtanding of the large and much Profeſſion which they had made in divers Sects, and alſo by the ſame, they came to ſee their want of the living God, though they had learned a notional and litteral knowledg of him, from them who ſpoke weakly upon the Scriptures, what they had gathered from the Letter, by their Hammerings and Toolings upon them, and ſo it came to paſs, that many who were diligent and zealous followers of theſe Miniſters of the Letter, through theſe dawnings of the Light of God and Chriſt, which began to appear in them, became to weary and tire of that miniſtration they were under, which was at beſt but that of the Letter, and for moſt part alſo, had much of Falſhood and Untruth mixed in with it, from the Worlds Spirit and Wiſdom, ſo that their Doctrine had neither the ſound Words of Truth, nor the Virtue and Life of Truth to make it Savoury and Nouriſhing into the Souls of the People, ſo that many come to loath and refuſe it, for it appeared unto them; no better then as Dead & Corrupted Water, yea as the Waters of *Egypt* that became Blood, which they loathed to drink of, and the ſame People who began

to loath the Doctrine and Miniſtry of the National Prieſthood, and alſo of others, who pretended more, finding it both Dead and Corrupt, they found great perpexity and heavineſs of Mind, as not knowing what to do, whether to go; they were preſſed in Spirit to leave and forſake the Dead and corrupt Miniſtry they were formerly under, as finding it hurtful, yea killing (for the Letter killeth) but they knew not where to find the living and true Miniſtery which might adminiſter unto them that which could anſwer unto the living deſires of their Souls, and could Satisfie and Nouriſh them; & at the ſame time there were divers, in divers Parts, who had ſome inward true and Living openings and Manifeſtations of Truth, but they were not come to a Clear and Sound State and Condition in their own particulars, nor to a clear diſcerning of the Manifeſtations and workings of Truth from their own imaginations. And from the Enemies transformings and likeneſſes, & yet in this uncleanneſs & unſoundneſs they went forth and ſpoke and declared and Preached and Writ many things, which becauſe they did in part iſſue or proceed from the Light of Truth, were much taking into their hungring & ſeeking Souls, who had left the Dead and taſtleſs Miniſtery they were formerly under, and ſo becauſe there was ſomewhat in the Words or Declaration of theſe men, which did partly anſwer unto the Witneſs and truth of God in their hearts, they began much to look after them, follow and hear them, and drink in their Doctrine, even as the parched and dry Land drinketh in the Rain of a Summer ſhower; yet this came to prove much unto the great hurt and loſs both of theſe Teachers, and alſo of them who gave up to be taught by them.

For their Miniſtery not ſtanding in that cleanneſs and ſoundneſs, either of Doctrine or Spirit, as was needful, it could not but prove as unwholſom and hurtful food, eſpecially ſeeing there was not that diſcerning begot in People, whereby they could make a clear difference betwixt the pure and the impure, that which was of God, and that which was but of Man, and of the Enemy; betwixt the pure and clean Grains, and the Tares; for indeed in their Miniſtry they did not ſow altogether clean Grain,

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but many noiſom Tares with it, and that in much more abundance, then the true Wheat, *and the Tares ſprung up, and choaked the good Seed, and hindered it, ſo the good Seed withered in many*, and in many others was in a decaying and withering condition, but the Tares waxed great and flouriſhed, and as for thoſe Teachers who went forth as to ſow, for moſt part, it proved moſt to their own loſs and prejudice, for not being brought into a cleanneſs and ſoundneſs in their own particular Condition, neither as to Doctrine nor Spirit, the Serpent who beguiled the Woman, betrayed the ſimplicity in them, and ſo through his ſubtilty drew them forth ſtill further and further from the true openings of Truth which at ſometimes were opened in them truly from the Lord, out into their own vain imaginations and apprehenſions, and alſo into the Enemies transformings and likeneſſes: whereby the tender dawnings and breakings forth of Truth became to be vailed and clouded in them, and the Darkneſs prevailed to blind the Eye, which had received ſome half opening, and ſo their latter condition was worſe then the firſt, yea many of them became worſe then others, as unſavoury Salt, having run out from the Sence and Savour of that which Savoured them in ſome Meaſure, and thereby gave occaſion of offence unto many People; for ſome of theſe aforeſaid, having run out from the Meaſure of Truth in their own particulars, vented and publiſhed both in Words and Writing, Groſs, Unſound and Pernicious Doctrines, and others of them became looſe and deſolate in their lives, all which the Enemies of Truth charged upon Truth it ſelf, and ſpoke evil of the Way of it, unto many Simple People, who too much believed them, and ſo were ſcared and offended, even at the appearance of Truth it ſelf.

And about the ſame time, the People, even thoſe of them for moſt part, who were moſt tender, Ingenious and Zealous, (through a weakneſs of underſtanding, and becauſe of the cuſtomary Way they had been uſed to) had too much an Eye to Words, and too much a Life in them, for they could not meet together, but ſome behoved to ſpeak, in Doctrine Exhortation or Prayer, *&c.* Otherwiſe they would have thought the Time miſ-

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ſpent, ſo much as paſſed away of it without Words, for their minds were much drawn forth, ſeeking ſatisfaction, and refreſhment in outward Words, Practices and Obſervations, which yet they found not, but both their Words and Practices for moſt part proved their Burden, and they Groaned under them, and yet they knew not what to do, for they ſaw no way how either to Worſhip God, or profit their own Souls, or one another, but as they thought was in Words, or outward Practiſes and Obſervations, and yet they miſſed the Kingdom, which they in ſome true Meaſure deſired, and ſo were ſcattered abroad, as in Divers Flocks and Companies, like Sheep without a Shepherd, ſeeking the true Fold and Paſture, but not finding it.

And the Lord who had Pity upon them of Old, whom he beheld as Sheep without a Shepherd, and whoſe Bowels Yearned over them, in the ſame Yearnings of Bowels extended his tendrr Mercies and Compaſſion into theſe, who at that time had Tender Breathings and deſires raiſed in them after himſelf, and to know and Worſhip Him aright, and in the acceptable Way, and he prepared Meſſengers, and ſent among them, in a needful and acceptable time, who having attained unto the ſoundneſs and clearneſs in their own Condition, both as to Doctrine and Spirits, through the Power and Grace of the Lord, with and upon them, (which others before them, as aforeſaid, were not come into) Preached the glad Tidings of the Goſpel in Purity and Soundneſs, upon a People whom the Lord had prepared to receive them, as he had prepared them to Miniſter to them, the firſt Principles whereof were to this purpoſe or effect; That what was to be known of God was manifeſt within, that the Kingdom of God was to be ſought after, and found within, by every Man, in a Heavenly Seed and Principle, which was of God in every Man, the Word near in the Mouth, and in the Heart; that God & Chriſt was to be ſought within, found, received and enjoyed within, in the Meaſure of the Light wherewith he did enlighten every one that comes into the World, and that whoever do truly believe in God and in Chriſt, muſt believe in the Light, wherewith Chriſt did enlighten them, who is given of God

God a Light to lighten the Gentiles and the People, and who ſo believe in the Light, which convinceth of ſin, judgeth and reproveth it in thought, Word and deed, come to receive life by it, and be made alive unto God, ſo as to have a Sence of his Divine Power and Vertue, and to ſee him, and behold him, and enjoy him, and have fellowſhip with him; in which Life they come to receive Power over Death, Sin and Darkneſs, and in the ſame, they come to receive the true knowledge of God and Chriſt, and the things pertaining to his Kingdom; and therein, and therefrom, and thereby they come to receive right thoughts and apprehenſions of God, and alſo the right and ſound Words, which are fit to be ſpoken of him, and concerning him, and his Way and Kingdom; and which thoughts and Words had a manifeſtation of his heavenly Life and Vertue in them, as they were received in the Living and Eternal Word, near, and in the Heart; and ſo that all thinking or ſpeaking of God, or to him, or the things of his Kingdom, behoved to have this riſe, the Word, Light and Life of God in the heart; otherwiſe they were all wrong, dead and unſavoury, and ſo neither acceptable unto God, or profitable either unto the ſpeakers or hearers; and in like manner, all practices and works, which are not wrought in this Principle, the Light, Life and Spirit of God, within, are but dead and unprofitable, Works and Fruits of Death and Darkneſs, as not having the Life of God, for their Riſe, Spring and Original, and ſo the firſt beginning of the Miniſtry, in great part, was in the Life and Power of God to call off people from all their dead and dark thoughts, Words and Works, as to God, and his Way and Worſhip, which were not brought forth in the Life and Light of God in the Heart, were not thought in the Life, ſpoken in the Life, done and practiced in the Life, as being all but falſe, unſound, unprofitable, and unacceptable; and as the ſound and clear Miniſtration given them, in the Light and Life of God was to call people off from all the thoughts Words and Works of Death and darkneſs, ſo was it alſo to call them off, and turn them from the Darkneſs it ſelf, unto the Light, which lighted every one of them, and from Death unto the Word of Life, nigh unto every one, and which would

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give Life unto every one, who became turned towards it, in the drawings and Vertue thereof, and this was the clear and Sound Miniſtration, which the Apoſtles received from Chriſt, and particularly *Paul*, who was ſent unto the Gentiles, to turn them from Darkneſs into Light, and from the Power of Satan unto God, which Miniſtration, as it was greatly Bleſſed of God in the primitive times, unto that effect ſo was it, and is it in this our Day, the Work of Labour and Love of him, whom the Lord ſent as the firſt of many others who came after, did greatly proſper, (though in much contradiction into many who oppoſed, ſome through Ignorance, and others through Malice) whereby in a ſmall time many out of Divers Sects and Profeſſions came to be turned into the Light, and be convinced of it, and by it, that it was the very ſaving Light of Chriſt Jeſus, notwithſtanding of all that Prieſts or Profeſſors ſaid or diſputed to the contrary, for the Miniſtration had that Light and Evidence, Life and Authority, yea Power & Dominion of Truth in it, which even by a Spiritual compulſion, forced an aſſent in the Hearts of many, and the Meaſure of Truth which was Clouded and Vailed in many, came to be reached unto, through this Miniſtration, ſo as to anſwer unto it, to the ſufficient convincement of theſe, in whom it is thus anſwered.

And as for them who came to be clearly and ſoundly reached, ſo as to feel the Power and Life of God in the Miniſtration reach into the Meaſure and Seed of Truth in their own particulars: O what a Day and Time it was unto them, that was even ſuch a Day as they had never the like of it before, nor (in ſome Sence) after it, for it was a Day unto them both of Joy and Heavineſs, Comfort and Sorrow, Light and Darkneſs, Life and Death, their Joy and their Comfort was in the Morning Dawnings of the Beauty and Glory of God, which begun ſomewhat to appear in the Light, as they became turned towards it; but their heavineſs was, in that they began to find the exceeding ſinfulneſs of ſin, and how to feel themſelves ſo hedged and compaſſed about with intanglements and hindrances both within and without, but more eſpecially within, to ſtop them from entring into the new and living

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ving and perfect way of God, which began to be revealed in the Light, insomuch that they came to see that these things which they formerly counted gain, were now Dung and loss unto them, and that which they esteemed as their Glory, became now their shame, as namely their large Profession and Righteousness, and way of Worship, which stood in Dead and empty performances, in the oldness of the Letter, in which they had a Life, and which had a Life in them also, but it was the Life of Death, which Reigned in them, and do Reign in all, from *Adam* unto *Moses*, yea and whose Reign is not put down, until Christ the Blessed Seed and Life be Witnessed raised and revealed in the Particular; and so this Day of God brought Death and Darkness over all that false Life and Light, which had Place in them formerly, and stained all their false Beauty and Glory, even all the Glory of Flesh, or of the First-birth, in all the Wisdom, Counsel and Knowledge thereof, and in all its thoughts and apprehensions of God, and in all its Words, and Works, and Practices, and Righteousness, whereby it came to pass that these who seemed to have, and had much Knowledge and understanding of God and Christ, but it was according to the Flesh or First Birth, began now to See and be Convicted, that they were very Ignorant, so as even to say, surely I am more Bruitish then any Man, and I have not the understanding of a Man in me; and thus many, who were Teachers of others, for many years, came to be Convinced that they had need to Learn the very first Principles of the Doctrine of Christ, and so these who had stood in a long and Large Profession of Words, and attained to great Abilities that Way, in Doctrine, Exhortation, and Prayer, *&c.* Whether through Education or frequent Practice, being come to a true and Living Sence and Convincement, that it was all but Carnal and Fleshly, or at best stood in a great Mixture, having more of Flesh then Spirit in it, and more of Death and Darkness, then of Life and Light, which is hurtful, as aforesaid, came to be gathered out of all that Bulk, and heap of Words into the waiting Place, in the Measure of the Light, which had Convinced them, and given them some Sence of their Con-

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ditions, ſo to wait upon the Lord in his Light in all poſſible ſtilneſs and quietneſs, and ſilence of Mind, not only out of all outward Performances and Words, but even out of all Thoughts and Apprehenſions of God or Chriſt, and all inward motions and Workings, which had not the Light, or Word, or Spirit of God in their Hearts, for the Rife and Spring, and this they were brought unto through the Miniſtration aforeſaid, which pointed or directed them unto this place, even ſilence, both as to Words and Thoughts, and that both apart and together, by which Miniſtration alſo they were called to aſſemble or gather together in the Name of Chriſt, whoſe Name is the Light, the Wiſdom and Power of God, and the ſecond *Adam*, the quickning Spirit, to wait together in this Silence.

So in this Name they were called and directed to aſſemble or gather together, to wit, in the Light, Wiſdom, Power and quickning Spirit of God, ſo they were not to come in their own Wiſdom and Spirit, or in the Wiſdom and Spirit of the firſt *Adam*, as to Meditate, Teach, or Pray, or give Thanks in the Words which that Wiſdom and Spirit did teach them, for that had been to meet in the name of the firſt *Adam*, and not in the Name of the ſecond, whoſe Name is the Light, and the Life, and the Power, and Wiſdom of God, as aforeſaid, and ſo this Wiſdom, and Power, and Name, was to furniſh them in all they did or ſpoke in their Meetings or Aſſemblies; and to this the Apoſtle directed the Believers in his day, that whatſoever they did in Word or Deed, they ſhould do it in the Name of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt; if they Taught, it ſhould be in his Name, to wit, in his Light, Life and Power; and if they Prayed it ſhould be in this; and if they gave Thanks it ſhould be in this; and then the Words uttered or expreſſed by them ſhould be Spirit and Life, that would both reach unto God, for a ſweet Savour and Odour before him, and alſo unto his Witneſs in the Heart of them who heard, for what they ſpoke ſhould not be the Word of Man, but the Word of God, Chriſt the Word, the Light, and the Life, ſpeaking in them, and through them, as Chriſt ſaid unto the Diſciples, *It is not you that ſpeak, but the Spirit*

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Spirit of the Father that ſpeaketh in you, and according to this *Paul* ſaid, *That no Man could call* Jeſus *the Lord, but by the Holy Ghoſt*; for the Name of the Lord is a living Name, and ſo cannot be named but by the Power and Vertue of his own Life; indeed a Man, in his own natural Spirit may pronounce the Letter of the Name, but the Letter is not the Name, for the Name is the Word of God, but the Letter is not the Word, and ſo it is one thing to pronounce the Letter or Letters, but for another to name or ſpeak the Word of God, yea, or inwardly only to conceive in it the Mind or Heart, which none can do but by the Holy Ghoſt.

Now about this time that divers were convinced, as aforeſaid, and gathered together in Divers Places, through very Neceſſity, their Meetings came to be Silent, for ſome Time, though the Firſt Rice and Ground of their Meeting in Silence, was, that they were taught it of the Lord, foraſmuch as there were but few, who were then attained unto that Soundneſs and Clearneſs of Condition, in their own Particulars, ſo as thereby to be fitted and Qualified in the Word, Life, Power, and Wiſdom of God, to Miniſter unto others in Divers Places, Friends being but very young at that firſt breaking forth of Truth; and ſo their Works was moſtly, if not only to joyn together, in a joynt Concurrence to wait upon the Lord, for the indurings of his Power from on High, and to ſee the Work and Operation of his Word, Light and Life in them, every one being turned unto the Manifeſtation thereof in their own particulars: For indeed in beginners, or thoſe who are but lately turned unto the Light and Life of Truth, it hath much to Work through in them, and they have many Steps of inward Tryals and Exerciſe to Paſs through in the Light and Life of Truth, before they attain unto that Soundneſs and Clearneſs in their own Conditions, whereby they can ſafely and Purely Adminiſter the Word and Words of Life unto others without mixture; for Firſt a Man muſt be in a good Meaſure gathered into the Life and Spirit of Truth, ſo as to be well rooted and faſtened in it, in his own particular, before he be in ſuch a fit Condition as to Miniſter unto others, with ſafety and

advantage; and the Word of Life must first have some free passage in a Mans Heart, Mind and Spirit, before it can have a free passage in the Mouth, and it must have got some good Measure of Command and Dominion over the Heart, and the Thoughts and Affections thereof, otherwise it cannot so conveniently, and readily have the command of the Mouth, so as to order and direct it, that the Mouth steadily and soundly, only as the Instrument of the Word and Spirit of God, may only express or declare the living Words of God, otherwise as where the Heart is not under the command of the Life as aforesaid) the Mouth will reel and stagger in its expressions, and be apter to speak the Words of the Wisdom and Spirit of Man then of God; now as the Words of the Spirit of God and Christ are in the Mouth Spirit and Life; so the Words of or from the Spirit of Man, though even gathered from the Scriptures, are instead of Spirit, but Letters; and instead of Life, but Death; the one is Spirit and Life, the other but Letter and Death, which Profits not, but hurts; yea even the Mixture, (as where it is partly Letter, and partly Spirit) as much as possible, is to be shunned and forborn, especially, in this so Clear and Glorious manifestation of Truth, which calleth out of all Mixtures, both in Words and Works unto Purity, soundness and simplicity in all, and now doth more pressingly require it, then in the Times of Ignorance and Darkness that are past.

Thus I say, that even very necessity at first occasioned their silent Meetings of Friends in Divers places, every one being afraid to open the Mouth, nor daring to open, it till the Lord opened it by the Power and Vertue of own Spirit and Life, and though none durst speak or open a Mouth, nor had received that Spiritual Power and ability to do it, yet a necessity and Duty they found in it, to meet together, yea the least measure and appearance of Life and Light in every one did even draw them together, and when or wherever they came together in the drawings thereof, and sat down together in stilness and quietness, every one being turned and gathered unto their particular Measures, they came to find the Benefit, Advantage and Glory thereof, in a Wonderful and unspeakable manner; for after this manner they became

became all as one Body, and as Members together of the Body, and one of another by reason of that wonderful and excellent and Glorious Unity, which the several Measures of Life and Light, hath in the particular Vessels and persons. *For if even but two be together, & that each of both be gathered unto their own measure of Life, the measure of Life in the one doth after a secret & unspeakable manner reach unto the measure of Life in the other, & flow forth into it, whereby the one is raised, & Strengthened & inlarged by the other, & as it were fed & refreshed thereby, yea and the Life in the one doth so joyn, and Unite its force and Strength and Vertue unto the other, that every particular feels the Strength and Vertue of the twofold measure of Life, as it were doubled within themselves; and if they be three thus gathered together, the particular Measure of Life in every one reacheth unto every particular, so that one feels not only the Vertue Force and Strength of his own particular Measure of Life, but also the very force and Strength of the other two, so that his Life is as it were strengthened, enlarged and refreshed, as in a threefold degree, and so still as the number of these do increase, who come indeed to Witness any Measure of the Life and Light of God to spring up in them, all the particular Measures of Life in the particular Vessels, or Persons in whom it hath appeared, Uniting in one, even as many small Streams, become as a large river of Life, which in the wholeness, or Universallity of it, hath its Course Motion and Operation, in and through every Member, in some Measure, according to the capacity of each; and thus the whole Universal Life and Spirit of the whole Body reacheth, in its whole Vertue, in some Measure unto every Member for the quickning, refreshment, and edifying thereof, as even it is in the Natural Body, for the Natural Spirit that is Universally diffused through the whole, reacheth unto every Member in the Body, with its Influence Life and Virtue, and a plain example whereof we have also in the Light, that is Natural, for if a Company of People should come into a dark place, every one of them having a Lamp or Candle lighteth, each person injoyeth not only the Light of his own, but also of all his Neighbours, where each suffer their Light freshly to shine forth.*

And of this Friends having such manifest and clear Experience in their own particulars, they became greatly indeared toward, one

one another in all Pureneſs and tenderneſs of Love, and finding the great Benefit and Advantage which they had in one anothers Company, Preſence and Fellowſhip, as of one being a Strength to another, their Life and Spirit reaching unto them, oft without all Words, yea in the ſilence or ceaſing of Words they were drawn to meet often together, for that in the Preſence and Company of one another they were inwardly Refreſhed, Comforted, Quickened and Strengthned, through that Communion and Communication of the Spirit and Life of God, from Veſſel to Veſſel, as from one upon all, and from all upon one, and this is that Communion of the Saints, which is a Myſtery forever ſealed from all Natural Men, but is moſt open and clear to every Child of Light, yea even unto the Youngeſt, who are but as Babes and Sucklings in the Truth.

And oft times it ſo comes to paſs, that one only particular Perſon is made an occaſion of great Refreſhment, Quickning and Comfort unto many, yea unto a whole Meeting, ſo that in good and certain experience, where divers have come together, but Life had but a weak or ſmall manifeſtation in and among them, as being but young in the Truth, and much Death and Darkneſs as yet having place, which Burthened and Clouded the tender Life, ſo that, as it were the Power of Death and Darkneſs could be felt to work ſtrongly in the Meeting, by reaſon of which thoſe who met had much ado to wreſtle againſt the ſaid dark Power, yet the coming of one among them, and ſitting down with them in the Meeting, to wait together upon the Lord in pure Silence, has occaſioned Life in great Glory and Dominion to ſhine forth, & flow like a mighty River through the whole Meeting, and every particular Member thereof, by which every particular could ſenſibly feel the Power of Darkneſs and Death, which did Burthen and Weaken the Meeting, and quench or ſtop the ſpringing up of Life, to be removed by the force and ſtrength of Life, which broke forth againſt it, and diſpelled it, as the Sun in his ſtrength diſpelleth and breaketh a Cloud into pieces, the occaſion of which hath been, that the one aforeſaid hath had the Life of God in his own particular raiſed into a large ſtature and meaſure

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measure of Power and Dominion, whereby his Life hath had its course through all that Darkness that stood in the way, to the reaching the weak and small measures of Life in the others, and so by its Influence quickening and strengthening Life in every particular, till it was raised over all that stood in its way, and all were abundantly Refreshed, Comforted and Quickened, and such through the Goodness and Providence of God, are sent unto others, or raised up, among them to be unto them as Nursing Fathers, and Stewards, and Shepherds, unto whom, as it were, the Keys of the Kingdom were given, that may open it unto others; not but that it is possible to be opened, even without all Instruments from without, yea the Service and Benefit of Instruments, fitted and prepared of God, hath been, and is found to be great unto the more abundant opening of it, and helping the Weak and Feeble unto the more ready and easie entrance into it, wherefore such cannot but be dearly Loved and Honoured in the Truth, for their Works sake; and because of that excellent measure of Life in them, which hath such universal Influence and Service unto all.

And though the Unity and Fellowship of the Children of Light and Truth doth not simply consist in their outward Nearness, Company, or Presence, for that though at never so great an outward Distance, their Unity remains, in that Spirit which reacheth over and through all, yet it is certain that even their being together in the outward (when they are gathered in the Name of Christ as aforesaid, as in the particular measure of his Life and Light made manifest in them) doth greatly conduce and contribute to increase and strengthen their Unity, and to make their Fellowship and Communion of Life the more sensible as is known and witnessed by certain experience; for that when they are outwardly present, Life hath and oppertunity to convey it self unto one another, by an through the natural Spirit, and the very Face of one sharpneth another, as Iron doth Iron, for where Life is raised in the Heart, it hath its Image on the very Face or Countenance, which by a secret Vertue reacheth unto others. *Yea not only doth Life convey it self, and its pure influence, through*

through the Voice and Sight, but even through the taking one another by the Hand, where it is done in pure and undefiled Love, and by the laying on of Hands also, as was witnessed in the Primitive Times, so that those who were indued with a large measure of the Life and Spirit of God, while they laid Hands on them who Believed, Vertue went forth from that force and strength of Life in them, and reached unto these on whome Hands were laid, whereby they came to feel the Life to be raised in their own particulars, and the Power of the Holy Ghost to fall or break forth upon them, as even so it is witnessed at this Day, in and among the Children of Truth, through the former formality of laying on of Hands, that is in the false Church, which hath only the empty and bare imitation is not regarded.

And thus now it being showed, how great an Advantage and Benefit the Children of Light and Truth have in their Meeting together, through the Communication of Life, yea from all to every one, and from one to all, and that without all Words, as well as with them, the Benefit and Advantage of their meeting together, even in Silence, cannot but be manifest, and this serves to answer that common Objection used by many, who say, *We may sit silent at Home, and wait in silence in our own Houses, and so be as much edified, as to come to a silent Meeting, where nothing is spoke for our Instruction or Learning*; to which I say, nay if your outward Liberty and Health can permit you to come, and yet you come not, but stay at home, you cannot Profit, nor be Edified so much at home, though you should give your selves to waiting in silence, as by coming to the Meeting of the Lords People and waiting together with them in silence, first, because to meet together is the Ordinance of God, which he doth bless; yea he hath promised that where two or three do meet together in his Name he will be in the midst of them, and this promise is to meeting simply in his Name, though there should be no Speaking among them; but secondly because as is said, through that universal influence of Life, which the whole Meeting hath upon every particular Life, to raise and refresh, and strengthen Life in every particular, therefore it is manifest; that it is more profitable and edifying to wait with others, where oppertunity can be had

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had then alone, for while we wait with others, we become a ſtrength and help unto one another in waiting, which many can ſeal the truth of by certain experience, who have found much more ready and eaſie acceſs and entrance to wait upon the Lord, and a much more freedom of Mind from vain Thoughts and Encumbrances while they were waiting with others, then while alone; as alſo many has been Convinced and brought to the knowledg of the Truth by coming to Silent Meetings, and ſeeing as is ſhowed that Life doth readily moſt prevail & abound while they wait together, ſurely theſe occaſions cannot but be the more Edifing and Profitable, when rightly improved, for when Life is moſt raiſed, and doth moſt prevail and abound in the Heart, then a man hath the beſt opertunity to feel the operation of it in him to work and purge out the old Nature and Spirit, with the Works thereof, and to leven him into a new lump, ſo as to mould and transform him unto its own pure Similitude and Image.

And ſo theſe who came together, to meet after this manner in Silence, ſo that they would ſit together many hours in a deep Silence and Quietneſs, came to find great Benefit and Advantage in them, yea and a great Glory, though ſuch Meetings became the Worlds wonder, and natural and darkſpirited men did ſcorn and deride them, as they do unto this day, yet the Children of Truth found them, and do find them the moſt Profitable and Edifying Meetings that ever they were at, where all Fleſh is made Silent, and the Lamb alone is waited for to appear in his Temple, and ſpeak forth his holy Mind, Will and Counſel in ſuch Veſſels as are fitted and prepared of him, and thoſe who met together in this Silence, where, at that time perhaps, not one in the Meeting had a Mouth opened, or utterance gave them, in the Life and Spirit of God, came in due time to receive the opening of the Mouth in a very large and powerful, and glorious manner, as continues unto this day with them who yet remain alive in the Body, and now many have received an opening of the Mouth, and come to witneſs the Word of Life ſprung up in great Power and Glory, to the putting Words into their

Mouths, which are Spirit and Life that Minister Grace, largely unto the Hearers, and are a Sweet and Precious Savour and Odour unto God, even a Sacrifice of a sweet Smell; and so they witnessed the Promise fulfilled unto them, upon the matter (though the many Tongues and Languages, with other circumstantial things be not) as the Disciples did, who were commanded to tarry at *Jerusalem*, and wait for the Promise of the Father, which was the pouring forth and effusion of the Holy Ghost, or Holy Spirit, and Life of God upon them; and they wait, so it came to pass, that on the day of *Pentecost*, being assembled together with one accord, they were filled therewith, and began to speak forth the wonderous things of God, as they felt them in their Hearts, and as the Spirit gave them utterance.

And seeing they were not commanded to Speak, Preach, nor Pray, nor Sing, but in the Name of Christ, that is in his Life, Spirit and Power, as it moved them, it is manifest, at times, the Disciples, or Christians in the Primitive Times had Silence among them, as we now have, seeing they were not to Speak, but when the Life moved; and surely there were among them, who did not always feel the motion of Life to Speak, nor were always in a Capacity or Condition for Speaking, and though now, since the glorious increase and growth of Truth, few Meetings have some or other to whom a Ministry in Words is given more or less, so that seldom or rarely Meetings are under a necessity to be wholy Silent, from first to last; yet because of the great Advantage, and Benefit, and Glory that is found in them, Friends are many times willing and desirous to sit down and feed together in Silence, upon the heavenly and invisible Life, so as to reach unto one another in the Communications of Life, and feel the States and Conditions of one another therein in Silence, and enjoy that secret and hid Fellowship together which the World knoweth not; so as even to be silent, though both a Liberty and Ability in the Life may be present with divers (where no pressure no pressing occasion is found) to utter Words, which indeed hath a great Glory in it, that People should Converse together in Spirit and deep Silence, and without all Words.

Now

Now among divers great and blessed Advantages and Benefits, which they who came to be Convinced did find, in the sitting down together to wait in silence; there were some that in the silence, their Minds being turned towards the Light and Life of God which had appeared to them, they came to find their Mindes stayed therein and thereby, for a great and mighty Power broke forth, in the Light, unto which their Minds were turned, and did gather their Minds into it more and more, whereby they came to know a being Planted, and Grounded, and Rooted, and Setled, and Established in the Truth, and in the Light, and Life, and Spirit and Power thereof; and so they came to be gathered out of all the Tossings and Waverings of Mind, and out of all the Incumbrances and Wandrings, into Stability and Steaddiness in the Truth, which was even as to be delivered from a Stormy and Tempestuous Sea, and brought to dry Land; and thus also they came to be gathered out of all their own Thoughts and Imaginations, and uncertain Conjectures and Guessings concerning the things of God and Religion, into the clear and certain manifestation of Truth, by which also they came to receive an inward discerning, so as to distinguish & make a difference infallibly betwixt things and things in them, as to see and know and feel what was of God, and what was not of him, but of Man or of *Satan*; and so as they waited in this silence, their minds being turned towards the Lord, they could discern the right and wrong Spirit, and the Work and motion of each, and came to see what was to be Kept and Spared, and what was to be Denied; what was to be preserved Alive, and Cherished and Nourished, and what was to be Slain and Famished and Starved, and so in the Silence they came to find the pure Judgment of the Lord to pass over and through all in them, as the Refiners Fire, which purifieth the Glod and Silver, but consumeth the Dross and maketh a clear Separation, and the Power of the Lord God was found and felt to work mightily in them, for the breaking down, and Killing, and Consuming, and Destroyed every Evil Thing and Work, which had place in them and removing and taking out of the way whatever Clouded or Vailed,

Vailed, or Burthened the pure Life to ariſe and ſhine forth, and ſo the Mountains which were raiſed over the Seed and burthened it, came to be ſhaken, yea the Earth and the Heavens, (by which theſe bodily Quakings and Tremblings did alſo ſeize upon divers, and from this the Name *Quakers* was in ſcorn caſt upon Friends) that the Mountain of the Lord might be raiſed up a top of them all, and ſo through the mighty working of Gods Power, which was revealed in the Light, to which their minds were turned in ſilence, they came to be brought out of the mixture, wherein they ſtood formerly, into a clearneſs and ſoundneſs of Condition in the Truth, both as to Spirit and Judgment in their own particulars; and ſo they came to a clear and ſound underſtanding of the things of God, & of Truth, & Religion, and the way of Worſhip, and to have clear and ſound Thoughts and Apprehenſions of them, which did purely and clearly ariſe in the Light, in which their minds became ſtayed, and ſo in due time a pure and clear miniſtration in Words was given unto many of them, ſo that they preached pure, ſound & clear Doctrine, in a pure and clear manifeſtation of Life, unto which pure Miniſtration many came to be brought, who had a Miniſtration formerly among People of divers Sects and Opinions, which ſtood in the mixture aforeſaid, that was not clear Grain and Food, and therefore hurt both themſelves and others, but being gathered together unto this pure Miniſtration (which they received by ſitting down to wait upon the Lord, to learn together in ſilence, with all ſubjection, the pure and clear and perfect knowledg of things) they came both to be ſaved themſelves, and to be made inſtrumental to ſave many others: And ſo in ſilence they came to receive theſe many precious openings and diſcoveries of Truth and Religion; and the Scriptures were largely and purely opened unto them concerning theſe many things, which are the matters of Difference between the Friends and Children of Truth, and the Prieſts and Profeſſors, and theſe together with many precious and excellent Gifts of the Spirit, and alſo much inward Peace, Joy, Refreſhment and Conſolation in the holy Spirit, and much increaſe of Life and Grace, and Righteouſ-

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neſs and much Beauty, and Glory, and Dominion in the Life, were among the Bleſſed and Glorious Advantages they received in meeting together, and waiting together upon the Lord in pure Silence and Stilneſs, and which are all known and witneſſed, and found at this day (even as at the beginning) by them, who faithfully and diligently do obſerve them and improve them.

And by this means alſo the Truth came greatly to ſpread and gain Ground, and ſo doth at this Day, even in that theſe who were Convinced in all the parts and corners of the Land, where the ſound of Truth came, did meet together, though there were but two or three in a place, and ſat down together to wait upon the Lord in pure Silence, out of all their own Thoughts and Words, and Works, which was a great and loud Teſtimony, and did Preach all abroad far and near, which gave occaſion unto many who had ſome meaſure of Simplicity and Tenderneſs to conſider the thing, and the ſignification of it, that in a time wherein Profeſſors had ſo much a life in Words, (as if all Religion had been turned into Words, and in Speaking and Hearing, as indeed it was ſo with moſt part, that they knew no more of it, but to hear and talk Words, and ſo their Religion was a Monſter, as if all the Body were become the Tongue and the Ear) that a People ſhould be raiſed up to meet together in Silence, and in Silence to be Edified, and Taught and Inſtructed more then in all the Words they had formerly heard or ſpoken, and in ſilence to Worſhip God, and Pray, and give Thanks, and be Helped and Strengthened one by another, this gave occaſion, and doth and will give occaſion ſtill more and more unto many, that have any meaſure of Tenderneſs and Simplicity to look beyond Words into the inwards and ſubſtance of Religion; and indeed hereby many came to be Convinced, more then by all the Preachings in Words that ever they heard, the very Silence and Silent Meetings of Friends Preached unto them ſo Convincingly, and reached them, that they came both to confeſs and own the Truth, and to ſit down in ſilence with them who were formerly gathered, turning in their Minds to the Light,

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whereby they came to be partakers of the Benefits of Silence, as aforesaid, with them, and so they came to see the proportion of the true Religion, which is as a well proportioned Body, and is not all Tongue or Ears, but hath many other Parts and Members, and these far greater; for the Tongue, as said *James*, *Is but a little Member*; and so indeed the Words (which the Tongue can utter, and answers thereunto) are but a very little part in respect of these many other things which pertain unto the true Religion, and even, as in the Natural Body, many other Members receive power to execute, and do their proper and respective Offices, before the Tongue; as we see in Infants, who can use divers Members of their Body, but cannot speak with the Tongue; so is it even as to the true Religion, which first gives power as to the use of divers other things relating thereunto, before it gives power as to speak of them, so that obedience unto the Truth, and the practice of a holy Life and Conversation, doth most naturally proceed the speaking of or concerning the Truth; and this is the order of Christ, who said, *He that keepeth my Commandments, and teacheth men so to do*, (so here is first keeping the Commandments before teaching unto others) *the same shall be great in the Kingdom of Heaven.*

And so Friends being turned towards God, to wait upon him for his Teachings in their Silent Meetings, have not their Meetings to depend upon any Speakers or Speaker without, whatsoever, and therefore they can and do meet together with Advantage when they know not of any Speakers; and thus their Meetings are constantly kept up for a Testimony to Truth, and the Edification of themselves, as also for the reaching unto others; whereas among all other Professions and Professors, it is quite otherwise, for if they have no Speaker, they have no Meeting, and so their Meetings depend upon the Words and Lips of men, as if they could receive no good in Meetings but what dropped from the Lips of men, whereas the good that Friends look at, and wait for in Meetings, and do receive, is far beyond all Words whatsoever, even the very Words of Life, (which Words are precious unto them notwithstanding, and desirable in

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in their place) and that Good is the Life it ſelf, which was before Words, and will be when Words are not, and in which all Words are to ceaſe; but the Life endureth for ever, in which Friends have Fellowſhip with God, and one with another.

And as touching Silent Meetings or Meeting together in ſilence, it is not only traceable among the Diſciples and Apoſtles in the Primitive Times as aforeſaid, but even in the Old Teſtament ſo called (although it be thought ſuch a ſtrange thing among Prieſts and Profeſſors generally) for did not *Job* and his Friends meet together in ſilence 7 days, *Job* 3. 13. *And did not Ezekiel ſit among the Captives 7 days, and did not open his Mouth to any, till at the End of them, when the Word of the Lord came to him, Ezek.* 3. 15, 16. *Yea, and the Iſlands are bid be Silent before him, Iſa.* 41. 1. and ſaid *Zechariah, Let all Fleſh be Silent before the Lord, for he is raiſed up out of his Holy Place, Zech.* 2. 13.

George Keith.

POST-SCRIPT.

The Copy of a Letter written from Germany, *by* Stephen Crisp, *to Friends, which doth suit with the preceeding Paper.*

ALL Friends every where, who have tasted of the Goodness of God, keep in the Savour thereof, and let not your Minds be stoln away from that which is Living, for that which is Living cometh from Above, and makes you Lively, but that which is Corruptible cometh from the Earth, and brings Death with it over your Souls; and therefore watch in diligence to retain the Savour of the Life of Truth, that you may Live, from a sence that Christ liveth in you, who is the Seed, the Truth, the Noble Plant, and grows and bringeth forth Fruit in you.

And all Friends, every where, who thus keeps and retains the Savour of Life in them, they will come to feel daily Quickenings thereby, and will have power over the Nature that is dead in *Adam* to all good Works, and especially to waiting upon God with a stedfast and stay'd Mind: Nothing so hard as this to that old and corrupt Nature which

which is ſoon weary. This is that Nature which cannot watch with Chriſt one hour, but let his Tryals and Sufferings be never ſo great this leads from Watching to Sleeping, this hath no Fellowſhip with the Seed of God in its Sufferings, and ſhall have none in its Dominion. And where this drowſie Nature ſtands Uncrucified, it keeps you in the Weakneſs out of the Power, and this brings out of the ſavour and feeling of the Goodneſs of God, and ſo makes Meetings unprofitable, and as it comes through Cuſtom to be allowed and ſubjected to, it leads into Hypocriſie, that is to ſay, into a profeſſing to waiting upon God, and a preſenting the Body in the Meeting, and then letting the Heart (which God requires) depart far from him, even into the Eaſe and Liberty of the Fleſh, in which the Apoſtle ſaid, they that lived could not pleaſe God.

Therefore, Dear Friends, in the Name of God I exhort you, conſider what you do when you Aſſemble together, and let it be in the Name of *Jeſus*, that is in his Power, not in the Weakneſs, nor in the Fleſh like a Fleſhly Meeting, but in his Name and Power make War with the Fleſh, and with the Drowſie Spirit that lodgeth there, and in the Faith overcome it, and be not overcome by it, for that is Bondage: And hold your Meetings in the Spirit, where every one is made alive and flouriſheth, and grows in Life and in Dominion, and ſhines forth to the Glory of God, and to the Comforting and Refreſhing one of another.

For now as any one ſuffereth himſelf to be overtaken with Sleep in a Meeting, he looſeth the ſence of the Power of God, he becomes a Griefe to the Diligent, and

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an Evil Example to the Negligent, and brings himself under the Judgment of Gods Power in his own Conscience, which when he awaketh riseth up against him; and also he is under the Judgment of the Power in the whole Meeting, which, when he comes to a true sence of, will be no light thing; and further, if any that are unbelieving come in among you, and see such things among you, that make a profession of an inward Power, and an inward quickning Spirit, and a Worship that is inward in the Spirit and Truth, herein causeth such the Name of God to be Dishonored, the way of Truth to be holden in little Esteem, by such who know it not in themselves, and a Stumbling-Block is hereby laid in their way to hinder them from any farther seeking after the Truth. Oh Friends! consider these things, and be all diligent in this Matter, and let not that earthly part have Liberty, but let it be kept in the Cross till it Dies, or else it will keep and hold you Dead and Unsensible of God or one another. And this is that hath hindred the growth of many, namely their Carelesness in coming to Meetings, and their Slothfulness when they are there. Therefore for time to come, let every one that bears the profession of Truth, be diligent in the Work of God, and be good Examples to eac 1 other; and observe your time and hour of coming to Meeting; and set not one hour, and then come at another; and neglect not your middle week Meetings, by reason of your outward Occasions, for that will not bring a Blessing upon your Affairs, but let all things give way to the Service of God, and then all things shall work together for good unto you, and there shall be no lack of any thing that is good for you.

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So dear Friends, in the true love of God have I writ this unto you, as it lay upon me from the Lord, as a word of Exhortation, to ſtir up the pure mind in you all; and the God of Power and Strength give you of his Might, and of his Power to help you in all your Neceſſities, and in all your Combates, and ſtrengthen your Faith, in which and by which the Victory is obtained, which is the deſire of my Soul for you all, who am your Friend in the Fellowſhip of the Goſpel.

Stephen Scriſp.

THE END.

THE END